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[1832]

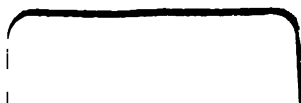
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A
S P E E C H

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS,

MARCH 22d, 1832,

ON

THE NEW PLAN

OF

NATIONAL EDUCATION IN IRELAND,

BY

HENRY, LORD BISHOP OF EXETER.



LONDON :

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE-STREET.

MDCCCXXXII.

647.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY W. CLOWES,
Stanford Street.

It was moved by the EARL of WICKLOW, "That inasmuch as
" by the plan of National Education established in Ireland,
" the Bible is practically excluded from Schools formed under
" the sanction of His Majesty's Government, this House cannot
" view the plan with approbation."

S P E E C H,

&c. &c.

MY LORDS,—I can assure the Noble Marquess who has just sat down, that I will adhere to the advice which he has been pleased to give to your Lordships, and will confine myself strictly to the question before the House. I have, in truth, no temptation to wander from it; for the question itself is far more than sufficient for me to hope to do justice to it; and it is besides far more interesting in itself, than any collateral matter could help to make it. My Lords, it is, I can assure your Lordships, felt to be so by thousands out of this House, and by not a few, I trust, within it. It is a question which, as it will be my duty to endeavour to satisfy your Lordships before I conclude, has not only excited, but has also justified, the greatest anxiety and alarm, both in Ireland, and throughout the empire at large.

Before I proceed, my Lords, to enter upon the discussion of this most important subject, I will venture to make one remark in reference to an observation of the Right Reverend Prelate behind me (the Bishop of Chester), for whom I may be permitted to say I entertain the most sincere respect. That Right Reverend Prelate has said that he could not consent, on this occasion, to raise his voice in condemnation of his Majesty's Ministers, although he disapproved of the plan proposed by them. My Lords, I too wish to be

understood, in the observations which I am about to address to you, as meaning to say nothing unnecessarily disrespectful to his Majesty's Ministers. My remarks will be made against the measure, and not against the men. And yet, my Lords, I shall not be restrained by any apprehension of incurring the censure of a Noble Lord who has recently addressed you, of being called factious, or belonging to a faction,—an accusation pretty liberally bestowed of late on those who have considered it their duty, on public grounds, to oppose a public measure,—I say, my Lords, I shall not be restrained by any apprehension of being charged as a member of a faction from speaking as becomes a member of your Lordships' House; and if I shall find it necessary to offer any very strong observations against the measure, I shall not scruple to do so; trusting, that the Noble Earl at the head of his Majesty's Government, and his colleagues, will understand that I wish my observations to apply as little as possible to them, but as much as possible to the measure itself. I say this the more readily, because I do not think that there are many among those Noble Lords, although officially responsible for the measure, who know what that measure really is.

My Lords, I do not make this charge on slight grounds; for when I hear Noble Lords who have spoken in defence of the new plan, particularly the Noble and Learned Lord (Lord Plunkett), declare, that the principle of it has been sanctioned by all the Commissions and Committees that have hitherto devoted their labours to the consideration of this subject, it is plain to my understanding that they know not what this new plan really is. My Lords, instead of being the same in principle as that which has been

recommended by the Reports of previous Commissions and Committees, I affirm, that the present measure not only has not the sanction of those Reports, but is in direct opposition to them all. If, therefore, my Lords, I establish this point to the satisfaction of your Lordships, I think I shall stand excused for saying that I very much doubt, or rather I do much more than doubt, whether the Noble Lords know what this measure really is.

My Lords, I will now beg leave to refer to the letter addressed to the Noble Duke at the head of the New Board of Education, whom I am most happy to see in his place, from the Right Honourable the Secretary for Ireland ; and I will beg leave, from that letter, which is the formal and official exposition of the new plan of national education in Ireland, to show what that plan is. It may be considered as dividing itself into three distinct particulars, as respects—first, the moral and literary instruction which it is proposed to afford to Protestants and to Roman Catholics in common ; secondly, the separate religious instruction of Protestants ; thirdly, the separate religious instruction of the Roman Catholics. From an examination of these several parts, I will undertake to show, that the real principle of this national plan of education is to exclude Scripture altogether from some of the schools supported by the State ; and to lay the least possible stress on Scripture as a part of that education in all. In truth, my Lords, strange as it may seem, this official exposition of the plan, I mean Mr. Stanley's letter, from the point at which it commences the development of his plan, is so constructed, as to avoid the very mention of Scripture at all.

First, as respects the common instruction of Protestants and Catholics, this is the provision :—

‘ They will require that the schools be kept open
 ‘ for a certain number of hours, on four or five days of
 ‘ the week, at the discretion of the Commissioners,
 ‘ for moral and literary education only. They will
 ‘ exercise the most entire control over all books to be
 ‘ used in the schools; none to be employed in the
 ‘ combined moral and literary instruction, except
 ‘ under the sanction of the Board.’

Now, your Lordships will see here is no mention of any book of Scripture to be introduced ; no, not even of a book containing extracts of Scripture. I know it has been a ground of complaint against the plan, that extracts are proposed to be given from the Scriptures, and not the Scriptures themselves. This is matter of complaint which has been frequently adverted to in petitions to this House ; and some of your Lordships also have made the same complaint. My Lords, my complaint is of a contrary kind. I complain, not that books of extracts of Scripture are to be used in these schools of moral instruction, but that they are *not* to be there used. My Lords, if volumes of well-chosen extracts from the Bible were to be used in the schools at the time of common instruction, I should not think it reasonable to complain, that the whole Bible is to be reserved for the times of separate religious instruction. I should think this no more than a fair concession to the peculiar circumstances of the case ; but, my Lords, there is absolutely no security whatever, that all books containing extracts from the Scriptures are not to be excluded,—rather, there is actual proof that all such books will be excluded,—as far as regards

the moral instruction of both Protestants and Roman Catholics.

I will take upon myself to show this presently ; but, in the meanwhile, let me go on to state what the provisions of this plan are for the religious instruction of Protestants. ‘They,’ the Commissioners, ‘will exercise ‘the most entire control over all books to be used in the ‘schools ; in the separate religious instruction none are ‘to be employed, but with the approbation of those ‘members of the Board who are of the same religious ‘persuasion with the children for whose use they are ‘intended.’ Why then, my Lords, it is clear that there is no other security for the use of the Bible, even in the religious instruction of Protestants, than that which is to be derived from the character of the individuals composing that commission, and even upon that point I shall have something to say presently.

I observe that some Noble Lords are disposed to think that I am inclined to cavil upon this point, but I think, when I come to enter further into the question, I shall prove to them that I have too good ground for the opinion which I have expressed.

With regard to the separate religious instruction of Roman Catholics, the provisions are the same as for the separate religious instruction of the Protestants ; neither the Old, nor the New Testament is required—all is to be left to the Commissioners of the two several persuasions.

Such is a general view of this new plan of national education. I proceed to a more particular inquiry into its three several parts.

In respect to the first part, I think I shall make it

plain, that the principle of this measure, so far as regards the joint moral and literary instruction of Protestants and Roman Catholics, is completely to exclude the use of the Bible, whether entire, or in extracts. In doing this, I fear that I must pray the indulgence of your Lordships for some trespass on your time, because I feel it necessary to have recourse to documentary evidence; and yet, however tedious that may be,—and still more tedious, the observations which I may consider it necessary to make on those documents,—I venture to be confident that your Lordships will patiently bear with me, not only because I have not trespassed on your attention before, and am not likely often to do so again—but much more in consideration of the great importance of the question now before you.

My Lords, I have said that the Holy Scriptures, whether in the entire volume, or in the form of extracts, are, in fact, excluded from the proposed plan of general education; and I think that this will appear in the clearest possible light, if I show that the exclusion or non-exclusion of them must depend on the good pleasure of the Board, and that there is one person placed upon this Board, who is not only likely, but whose duty it is, to exclude them.

My Lords, it must be borne in mind, that this letter of the Right Honourable Secretary refers to the acts of a preceding Commission, which took place some years ago—I mean the Commission of 1824-27, at which latter period their labours were concluded. My Lords, the Reports of that Commission furnished ample details of the opinions of the Roman Catholics, with whom they communicated. The Commissioners felt the great importance of the principle, that a lite-

rary and moral education should be based on the Scriptures. In their formal communication with Dr. Murray, on the subject of common instruction, a minute of which was made at the time, they thus express themselves :—‘The Commissioners then stated that ‘they could not consider any system of education as ‘deserving the name, which should not seek to lay the ‘foundation of all moral obligation in religious instruction.’—(So little notion had these wise and good men of any system of common instruction which should be *moral and literary only*.) They, therefore, ‘inquired ‘of Dr. Murray whether it would be objected to, on ‘the part of the Roman Catholic clergy, that the more ‘advanced of the Protestant and Roman Catholic ‘children should, at certain times during school-hours, ‘read portions of the Holy Scriptures together, out ‘of their respective versions, subject to proper regulations, and in the presence of their respective Protestant and Roman Catholic teachers?’ Dr. Murray answered, that serious difficulties would exist in the way of such an arrangement ; but he suggested an expedient,—that of introducing collections from the Scripture and books of extracts. Dr. Murray said, ‘No objection would be made to a harmony of the ‘gospels being used in the general education, which ‘the children could receive in common, nor to a volume containing extracts from the Psalms, Proverbs, ‘and Book of Ecclesiasticus ; nor to a volume containing the history of the creation, of the deluge, of the ‘patriarchs, of Joseph, and of the deliverance of the ‘Israelites, extracted from the Old Testament ; and ‘that he was satisfied no difficulties in arranging the ‘details of such works would arise on the part of the ‘Roman Catholic clergy.’ Thus it appears, that the

expedient of having books of extracts and collections from Scripture was first suggested by Dr. Murray ; and that he then contemplated giving these extracts from the authorised Protestant version, is plain from what occurred at a subsequent meeting.

My Lords, on the occasion to which I have already referred, Dr. Murray came alone, and made this statement before the Commissioners ; but in a few days afterwards he returned, bringing with him the three other titular Roman Catholic Archbishops of Ireland, and he said, ‘ It appears to be the wish of ‘ these gentlemen,’—(not at all implying that it was so much as a matter of wish to himself, and certainly implying that it was not a matter of conscience or principle to any of them,)—‘ it appears to be the ‘ wish of these gentlemen that anything given in the ‘ shape of Scripture should be in the Douay version for ‘ the Catholic children.’ Thus the matter stood on the 8th of January, 1825 ; yet on the 16th of December of the same year, it will be found that he positively objected, as of conscience and necessity, to anything being read, as Scripture, in the presence of the Roman Catholic children, unless it was in the Douay version ; he retracted, in short, all he had said, and objected to the use of any books that should give any part of our Lord’s own words, unless it was in that version. But he went further, and said that it was contrary to the discipline of the Catholic Church, that any books whatever should be placed in the hands of the Roman Catholic children, in which there was even a quotation from the Bible of the Established Church, where that Bible differed from the Douay version. Thus it became apparent, that no books of extracts from Scripture, *as Scripture*, no moral instruction based on the

Word of God, *as such*, could be admitted into the schools of common instruction, unless the Bishops of the Protestant Church would consent altogether to forego the use of their own version, the only version, I must be permitted to remind your Lordships, which the law of the land acknowledges as the Word of God. Not a text, or even a reference to it, would be tolerated by the Roman Catholics, if the reference to it were made as to the Scriptures—so decidedly were they opposed, within the short period of ten months, to their former statement in respect of the facilities which they were willing to afford to one common principle of instruction, and in order to promote the objects which the Commissioners had in view.

And yet, my Lords, I must be permitted to remark, that whenever it may seem necessary, or, possibly, expedient for Dr. Murray and his friends to act on a somewhat different principle from that which they have here announced, they find no difficulty in doing so. No doubt your Lordships will all remember that it was made a matter of great triumph, and adduced by the Noble and Learned Lord, the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, as a convincing proof of the liberal and Christian spirit of Dr. Murray, that a paper containing the first lesson set forth to be used under the new system, was moved for adoption by Dr. Murray; which lesson is to be suspended in every school, and enforced upon the mind of every scholar—a lesson, most certainly, of a highly laudable nature,—a lesson of Christian benevolence towards those with whom we differ in religious belief. Now, that very lesson contains citations from the Holy Scriptures in the version of the Church of England, even in texts where that version differs from the Rhemish, (I say Rhemish,

because that word, in strictness, refers to the translation of the New Testament, as the Douay version does to the Old,) and, as I have said, is to be stuck upon the walls of every school. This, I repeat, was proposed by Dr. Murray, although he had joined before in saying, or, by his silence, had acquiesced in the saying, of his brother Prelates, to the Commissioners of 1825, that it was contrary to the discipline of the Roman Catholic Church that the Roman Catholic children should have any book or extract, with such a reference, placed in their hands. I state this, to show how little confidence can be placed in the sincerity of the Roman Catholic Prelates, in any transactions in which the interests of their Church are concerned.

My Lords, it will be recollected, that the Commission of 1824 abandoned the experiment which they had endeavoured to carry into effect, because they found it impossible to get extracts from the Scriptures to be read in the schools. The consent of the Roman Catholics could not be obtained to the use of our version of the Holy Scriptures, even though they were compelled to admit that their own version was not, strictly speaking, an authorized version; for it never had received any sanction from Rome, and it had been repeatedly altered since its first publication. Our bishops, on the other hand, could not consent that the Protestant Bible—the only Bible acknowledged by the law of the land—should be abandoned at the demand, or to conciliate the co-operation, of the Roman Catholics. The consequence was, as we very well know, that the Commissioners of 1824 decided that the experiment could not go on; for as a volume, or volumes, of extracts from Scripture were essential, in their judgments, to the proper teaching of morality to Christian

children, and as no such volume could be agreed on, nothing remained for them to do but to relinquish an attempt which was thus proved to be hopeless. Now, on this occasion, Dr. Murray said, in a letter addressed to the Commissioners :—

‘ I will avail myself of this opportunity to express ‘ an opinion which you will not, I am sure, consider ‘ at variance with that respect which I sincerely entertain for the Board of Education Inquiry : it is, that ‘ that the Board has created for itself a very needless ‘ difficulty, by requiring, as a matter of necessity, any ‘ Scriptural compilation to be used in schools for the ‘ purpose of general instruction.’

It is quite manifest, therefore, that Dr. Murray thinks *any* such Scriptural volumes unnecessary ; and as he has also declared that any Scriptural compilation from the Bible of the Established Church ought not to be used, he will not, and cannot, assent to its introduction into the schools of general instruction. In short, my Lords, he must and will, if he have the power, exclude the Scripture from such schools altogether.

But, my Lords, that he will have the power, I proceed to show to your Lordships—and this not merely from considering the deference which would necessarily be paid to his opinion resting on alleged grounds of religious scruples, but also from a very peculiar circumstance, which will be found to deserve the closest attention of your Lordships. It certainly is most remarkable, that Dr. Murray, or some one in the interest of Dr. Murray, has assumed for him a power which was not intended to be given by Mr. Stanley’s letter : no less, in short, than a veto on all books proposed to be used for general instruction ;

and this object has been effected by foisting in an important word into the regulations of the original.

I am very happy to see in his place this day the Noble Duke (the Duke of Leinster) who is at the head of the Board of Irish Education; because I shall be set right in respect of what I call a most unwarrantable and unauthorized alteration of the instructions contained in that letter, if I am incorrect.

My Lords, it will be observed that Mr. Stanley's letter says—

‘It is not designed to exclude from the list of books for the combined instruction such portion of sacred history, or of religious and moral teaching, as may be approved of by *the Board*.’

Now, under this regulation, certainly, if the Board at large should think fit that a portion of the Scriptures should be used, any objection on the part of Dr. Murray would be useless.

[THE DUKE OF LEINSTER.—Hear! hear!]

I am happy to find that the Noble Duke acquiesces in this, and calls the attention of your Lordships to it; for I am quite sure that, after I shall have shown what has been done, you will find your attention has not been ill bestowed.

Your Lordships will observe that a public notice has been given by the Board of Education in Ireland, that they are ready to receive applications for aid on the part of those who may be disposed to establish schools under the direction of the Board.

My Lords, I hold in my hands the public advertisement of the Board to that effect. A Noble Lord near me says, in a tone something like that of taunt, that I am quoting from a newspaper. It is very true; but it is the very same document as was cited for a different

purpose, without objection from any of your Lordships, some nights ago, by the Noble and Learned Lord (Lord Plunkett) ; and I must take leave to say, that an advertisement from a newspaper is as regular a document, and as fit to be cited here, as any other paper which has not been formally laid on your Lordships' Table. I repeat, therefore, that my newspaper is as authorized a document as the Noble and Learned Lord's sheet, though this latter be of handsomer form and better type. Now, my Lords, in this advertisement, purporting to be the formal announcement of the Board's new plan of national education, and subscribed by the secretary to the Board, the rest of the regulation respecting the control of the Board over the books of general instruction is given *verbatim* according to the terms of Mr. Stanley's letter ; but before the word ' Board ' is inserted the word ' entire,' and the effect of the alteration, your Lordships will perceive, is to require the consent of all and every member of the Board to the use of every particular book ; thus giving, as I said, a veto to Dr. Murray, and enabling him, even if he stand alone, to exclude all books of extracts of Scripture, or anything else which might displease him, from the list.

[EARL GREY.—Where is the word ? I do not find it here, and this is the paper issued by the Board.]

Why, then, my Lords, if the Board has not in its own formal act inserted the word, it is quite plain that there is some power which can effect whatever alteration shall be deemed expedient in the acts of the Board, in spite of the intentions of the Board itself. This advertisement announces to the world the plan of education, and by it the conduct of the public in forming schools will be regulated.

[EARL GREY intimated that he had found the word in his paper.]

Oh, then, my Lords, it is in both papers ; in the handsome, official document, and in the more homely one in my hand, the word is equally to be found ; and I cannot be sorry for the doubt, which at first existed in the Noble Earl's mind on this point, as it must have increased your Lordships' attention to the circumstance, and at the same time, perhaps, has testified the Noble Earl's sense of its importance. I repeat, this word 'entire' is something superadded to the instructions of Mr. Stanley, something not in any degree justified by those instructions ; and I must take the liberty of saying further, that it would be satisfactory if the Noble Duke, at the head of the Board, could inform us how this unauthorized and most improper interpolation was made. I am perfectly satisfied that he was no party to it. I have heard much of the Noble Duke's high and honourable character ; I am persuaded—not too much ; and, therefore, I feel myself warranted in affirming, that he never contemplated so important a change in the instructions and powers which the Board received, as is involved in the interpolation of the word 'entire.'

My Lords, while I am sure it is not the Noble Duke's act, I am not sure whose act it was. But this I will say, it is not of English, it is not of Protestant origin—the taint of Jesuit is strong upon it—

'The offence is rank ; it smells to Heaven.'

Such, my Lords, has been the mode by which power has been given to every single member of the Board—to Dr. Murray, therefore, in particular ; who has declared himself bound in conscience to use that power,—to exclude all extracts from Scripture, if those extracts

be in the version which all Protestants consider—and which alone the law of this land considers—as Scripture, from the schools of common instruction of Protestant and Roman Catholic children.

My Lords, I proceed to the second part of this plan of national education,—the separate religious instruction of Protestant children. Here, too, I must remind your Lordships, that we have heard this new plan repeatedly and strongly defended, especially by the Noble and Learned Lord, the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, because the several Reports of the various Commissioners, and Committees of the House of Commons, assert principles in perfect accordance with those upon which the Government plan of education has been founded. Now I will take the liberty of asserting—and I fearlessly refer your Lordships to the documents themselves, to prove the correctness of my assertion—that so far from this plan being sanctioned by the previous Reports, it is in direct opposition to all of them—in every part of it—and not least in the part to which I am about to invite the attention of your Lordships.

My Lords, the whole control of the religious instruction of the Protestant children of Ireland will be placed, by this plan, in the hands of three Commissioners nominated by the Crown. I need scarcely tell your Lordships, that I entertain for the Protestant portion of the Board the very highest respect;—I have already spoken, and shall continue to speak, of the noble Duke at the head of the Board with the most sincere respect; but sure I am your Lordships will agree with me,—and I am also sure the noble Duke himself will be perfectly ready to admit—that there

is no great probability of his troubling himself much with minutely criticising the religious publications submitted to the Board. The duty of examining them must, then, of necessity, devolve upon the other two Commissioners—namely, the Archbishop of Dublin and Dr. Sadleir. I know both those learned persons, and of both of them I think most highly. Of the Archbishop of Dublin, I will say, that I never knew a man of greater powers, or of a more richly cultivated mind; I never knew a man more strenuous in the pursuit of truth; more fearless in following whithersoever that pursuit may lead him. In short, if ever I knew one man more than another who could be called a strict lover of truth, that man is the Archbishop of Dublin; and to say of any man that he is a strict lover of truth, amounts to saying that he is one of the best of men. But having said this, I trust it will not be imagined that I speak invidiously, when I say that this very ardent love of truth in one, who happens to have erred in the pursuit of it, only makes him the more unsafe as a guide, much more as the absolute arbiter of the opinions of others. In short, my Lords, I must not be afraid of saying, that the known opinions of the Archbishop of Dublin upon an important theological question are opinions, which, in a great degree, disqualify him for the situation to which he has been called;—that he is disqualified for that situation, not merely because he must be thoroughly ignorant of the state of Ireland,—not because he is, therefore, in imminent danger of being duped by the jesuitism to which I have already adverted,—but also because, as I have said, of those opinions.

The opinions of this most Reverend Prelate are no secret,—they are known, I presume, to most of

the noble Lords I have the honour to address. His opinion denying the sacredness of the Sabbath has been put forth to the world, and he is answerable for it to the world. Now what I say is this, that any man holding such an opinion,—and, not only holding it, but promulgating it to the world,—is not qualified to have a veto on the books that should be used in the education of Protestant children. Suppose a tract is put into his hand, the theme of which is, ‘Remember, that thou keep holy the Sabbath day’*—I put it to any man, is he or is he not a person who ought to be entrusted with the power of deciding as to the admissibility of such a tract?—My Lords, I perceive from the demeanour of some noble Lords near me, that they think this language invidious. My Lords, I disclaim any such intention. I mean nothing invidious. I, in common with the great body of the Clergy of the Church of England, and with all, I believe, of my Right Reverend Brethren near me, hold

* What I here said was founded on a note at the end of the fifth Essay in the *first* edition of the Archbishop’s work on ‘The Difficulties in the Writings of St. Paul.’ He there *denies that the Fourth Commandment is binding upon Christians*, and speaks of the observance of the Lord’s Day *simply* as ‘an observance which ‘has the sanction of the Church,’—asserting the authority of the Church to make such an appointment. I therefore scrupled not to state this opinion as disqualifying his Grace from being intrusted with the great power, which is given to him by the Commission, over the religious instruction of the Children of Ireland.

In the course of the debate, I found that the Archbishop had subsequently (in a *second* edition) guarded his opinion more carefully, and that while *he denies the obligation of the Fourth Commandment, and the divine appointment of the Christian Sabbath*, he enforces, on other grounds, ‘the proper observance of the Lord’s Day.’ I therefore, in my place, retracted the objection, as ‘having gone too far.’ I here again retract it, so far, but so far only, as this distinction requires.—H. E.

that this opinion is erroneous—I impute error, but nothing more than error ;—and I lament to think, in these days, that a man must either be supposed insincere himself, or to ascribe insincerity to another, if he gives him credit for conscientiously avowing and maintaining an error.

But, my Lords, the case stops not here. Much worse consequences may flow from the principle on which this Commission is founded. The present ministers would not, I dare say, advance a man to the Episcopal Bench in Ireland, who holds Socinian or Arian opinions. They would not knowingly do so. But there have been instances of such appointments ; even in our own times there was an Irish Bishop defamed as a Socinian. I will suppose such a man appointed to the Archiepiscopal See of Dublin, and to a seat at this Board, and then I find a Socinian vested with full power to control the religious sentiments of the rising generation of Ireland.

But, my Lords, the whole of this part of the measure is a flagrant violation of the spirit—and, I believe, even of the letter of the law of the land :—it is, too, a gross usurpation upon the rights of the clergy of Ireland.

By the statute law, it is the duty of the Protestant clergy of that country to make provision for the education of the people. The earliest Act to which I think it necessary to refer your Lordships, is an Irish Act of Parliament of the 28th of Henry VIII. This Act, after stating ‘ the importance of a good instruction in the most blessed laws of Almighty God ;’ and after further stating ‘ his Majesty’s disposition and zeal, that a certain direction and order be had, that all ‘ of his [Irish] subjects should the better know God, and

‘ do that thing which might in time be, and redound to
 ‘ our wealth, quiet, and commodity,’ proceeds, after
 other matters, to require an oath to be administered to
 every clergyman at ordination, and another at institu-
 tion, that he will keep, or cause to be kept, a school
 for to learn English, &c. And this is re-enacted by
 the 7th William III., c. 4, [Irish.] These provisions,
 as I presume I need not inform your Lordships, im-
 pose no obligation upon the beneficed clergy to main-
 tain those schools at their own expense; they merely
 convey to them a power, and impose on them an obli-
 gation, of seeing that these schools be established,
 and that no higher rate of payment be charged than
 the customary rate. In truth, this act does little
 more than add a pecuniary penalty to the sacred
 obligation, which, without any such statute, would
 have been imposed upon the Clergy of attending to
 the instruction of the young. It is their duty upon
 much higher grounds than those which any Act of
 Parliament can impose; for at their ordination they
 receive a power, and at institution they receive the
 assignment of a particular place in which to execute
 that power, of preaching the word of God,—and by
 preaching, as I scarcely need tell your Lordships, is not
 meant merely the delivery of sermons, but the whole
 spiritual care of their flocks. But the letter of the
 Chief Secretary for Ireland not only interferes with
 the obligation involved in the ministerial office, so far
 as concerns this most important particular of the cure
 of souls—the religious instruction of the children of
 the poor—but it also puts an end, or professes to put
 an end, to the obligations which positive Statutes have
 created;—for it, in effect, takes out of the hands of the
 parochial clergy that right and duty of superintend-

ence, with which several Statutes have invested them: This, I presume, will be considered by most Noble Lords as the assumption of something very like a dispensing power. Be this as it may, three Commissioners are nominated by the Crown, who are to possess the absolute power of dictating what shall be the religious instruction given to the children of Ireland;—thus taking from the parochial clergy in Ireland that which the laws of God and man had entrusted to their fidelity and discretion.

Now, my Lords, we are told that this plan is perfectly identical with that which was over and over again recommended by different Committees and Commissions. But so far is this from being correct, that the Commission of 1824 left this matter wholly and expressly in the hands of the clergy. The first Report of that Commission, at great length, asserts and establishes the right of the clergy, by Statute, to the superintendence of the instruction of the children of Ireland; and the Report of the Committee of the House of Commons in 1828 left the selection of books, for the religious instruction of the Protestant children, to the Bishops of the Church in general, who might be considered as the fit representatives of the clergy. But this new plan absolutely flies in the face of all that went before; and yet Noble Lords, and Noble and Learned Lords, defend this plan on the ground of its being founded on the very same principles.

But I come to the third part of this new scheme of national education, and I ask, how does it provide for the religious instruction of the Roman Catholic children?

My Lords, I am not prepared to say that it is the

duty of the State to insist on all persons learning in the Bible ; but this I say, that it is the duty of the State not to aid in any form of education which excludes the Bible ;—this I say, that all persons should have free access to the Bible, whether they will avail themselves of it or not. We should recollect that the preservation of a free access to the Scriptures is a duty imposed upon us by the law of God, and especially, that every Protestant Legislature, as such, is bound to take care that the people committed to its charge enjoy that privilege in its fullest extent ;—is bound to see that, neither directly nor indirectly, it makes itself a party to any measure adverse to this prime and fundamental Protestant principle.

In making these statements, however, I am perfectly willing to admit, that, in the present peculiar state of Ireland, it would be at once unwise and cruel not to give more than the Protestant version of the Scriptures. All that I contend for is, the duty of a Protestant Legislature and a Protestant Government to see that a version of the Scriptures, of some kind or other, be accessible to all ; and that it be actually used in the instruction of all, for whose education the State shall undertake to provide. Yet this the Roman Catholic hierarchy will not *now* permit. In truth, it cannot have escaped the attention of your Lordships, that the present demands of that hierarchy are of a much more lofty character than those which they urged at a former period ; though, to do them justice, their declared principles were then the same as now. In proof of this, I will refer to a petition of the Roman Catholic Bishops of Ireland to the House of Commons, presented in 1824, and published in the First Report of Commissioners of 1824, page 1. The words are these :—

‘That the religious instruction of youth, in Catholic schools, is always conveyed by means of catechetical instruction, daily prayers, and the reading of religious books, wherein the gospel morality is explained and inculcated; that Roman Catholics have ever considered the reading of the sacred Scriptures by children, as an inadequate means of imparting to them religious instruction; as an usage whereby the word of God is made liable to irreverence, youth exposed to misunderstand its meaning, and thereby not unfrequently to receive, in early life, impressions which may afterwards prove injurious to their own best interests, as well as to those of the society which they are destined to form.’

Such were the sentiments of the Roman Catholic Bishops at the period to which I refer, deliberately laid before the other House of Parliament. I shall now request your Lordships’ attention to another document, which I think not less interesting than important, for the purpose of illustrating and sustaining the positions which it is my object to enforce. I allude to an encyclical letter from Pope Leo XII. against the use of the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue, dated 3d of May, 1824, and published in Ireland with ‘Pastoral Instructions to all the Faithful,’ by the Roman Catholic Archbishops and Bishops of Ireland, and is to the following effect :—

‘We also, venerable brethren, in conformity with our apostolic duty, exhort you to turn away your flock, by all means, from these *poisonous pastures* (the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue); reprove, beseech, be instant in season, and out of season, in all patience and doctrine, that the faithful entrusted to you (adhering strictly to the rules of our Congregation of the Index) be persuaded that if the sacred Scriptures

‘be everywhere indiscriminately published, more evil than advantage will arise thence, on account of the rashness of men.’

To this passage the Irish Prelates, in their Pastoral Instructions, refer in the following terms :—

‘Our holy father recommends to the observance of the faithful a rule of the Congregation of the Index, which prohibits the perusal of the sacred Scriptures in the vulgar tongue, without the sanction of the competent authorities. His holiness wisely remarks, that more evil than good is found to result from the indiscriminate perusal of them, &c. *In this sentiment of our head and chief we fully concur.*’

My Lords, you have here before you the solemn judgment of the head of the Roman Catholic Church ; you have likewise before you the solemn judgment of the whole Irish Roman Catholic hierarchy. I will next state what an individual of that body—the most influential among them—Dr. Doyle, has said of his own separate sentiments : separate only in the sense, that he speaks in his individual capacity, but in no respect different from the general sentiments of the body. He says,—

‘The Scriptures alone have never saved any one : they are *incapable of giving salvation ; it is not their object ; it is not the end for which they were written.*’

These are his sentiments, though St. Paul tells us that the Scriptures ‘are able to make us wise unto salvation.’ Dr. Doyle goes on to say,—

‘They hold a *dignified place* amongst the means of the institution which Christ formed for the purpose of saving his elect ; *but if they never had been written, this end would be attained*, and all who were pre-

‘ordained to eternal life would have been gathered to the Church, and fed with the breath of life*.’

Such are the notions of Dr. Doyle respecting Scripture, and not of Dr. Doyle only, but of all the Roman Catholic prelates of Ireland. They will act in conformity to these notions, and, armed with the authority of this Commission, they will expel the Scriptures from the religious instruction of all their schools, even of those which are maintained at the expense of this Protestant State !

But, my Lords, does this accord with the recommendation of the Commissioners of Irish Education of 1824 ? So far from it, that they laid it down as a fundamental, an indispensable principle, that the Testament should be put in the hands of all children, Roman Catholics as well as Protestants. This was a matter which they would not permit to be brought even into question,—they insisted upon it as *essential*, (their own word, my Lords,) and they required the Roman Catholic prelates to furnish them with a version of the New Testament for the purpose. They permitted, indeed, that notes should be subjoined, requiring only that these notes should not contain matter of reasonable offence to Protestants. My Lords, I have pleasure in bearing testimony to the fairness and fidelity, with which this has been accomplished. I have pleasure in saying, that I have read those notes, and have found in them nothing whatever which can afford fair ground of offence to any reasonable Protestant.

My Lords, the Commissioners of 1824 insisted, I repeat, on this Testament being used in the religious

* Letters of J K L., p. 164.

instruction of the Roman Catholics, and on the children reading in it not only the epistles and gospels of the Sundays, but the epistles and gospels of the whole week, including a large portion of the New Testament.

My Lords, the Committee of the House of Commons of 1828 followed in the same line. They, too, required, that this New Testament should be printed and supplied to the national schools for the religious instruction of the Roman Catholic children : —

‘ Resolved, that it is the opinion of the Committee, that copies of the New Testament, &c. should be provided for the use of the children, to be read in school, &c.; the established version for the use of the Protestant scholars, and the version published with the approval of the Roman Catholic bishops for the children of that communion.’

Such was the resolution of the Committee of 1828 ; but the new plan abandons the Testament altogether. It does so, even though it professes to carry into effect the report of that Committee,—it does so, even though some special management (I wish not to use the word in an invidious sense, but simply to state the fact, that some management) was necessary to effect the purpose. My Lords, on looking to No. 6. of the Regulations of p. 5. of the Report of the Committee, and comparing it with No. 5. of the Regulations in Mr. Stanley’s letter, your Lordships will perceive what I mean. In the latter, all mention of supplying ‘ books of religious instruction’ (which included Testaments) is studiously omitted, even where that letter is copying the very part of the Report, which requires such a supply. Why, my Lords, is this? Why is it, that, in the plan of the present Board of Education,

which professes to carry into execution the recommendation of that Committee, there is no provision made for the supply of Testaments to any school in Ireland? Because, my Lords, the power which dictates to government in all that concerns the interests, or the wishes, of the Roman Catholic church, has chosen to demand the sacrifice—has chosen to demand, that the Bible should be altogether excluded from their schools. To this power our Protestant government has consented to surrender that which never before was permitted even to be asked.

My Lords, I have now gone through the various parts of this new scheme of national education, and I think its merits may be fairly summed up in this brief abstract. It has divorced morality from the word of God—it has controlled the Protestant priesthood in the exercise of one of their most essential rights, and in the discharge of one of their most important duties—subjecting them to a tyranny which the laws neither of God nor of man have authorized. It has conspired with the Roman Catholic hierarchy to arrest the progress of the Book of Life—to exclude that blessed book for ever (as vain man fondly deems) from every cabin of every peasant in Ireland,—and to consign the unhappy peasant himself to a deeper, deadlier state of darkness and of bondage.

My Lords, I have done—I have said what I had to say, and I thank your Lordships for the patience with which you have heard me. Be assured that I will not often trespass on that patience. My Lords, in the part which I have now taken, I have only endeavoured to discharge some portion of the duty which I owe to the high office in which I am placed. For, why is it,

my Lords, that we Bishops sit here? Why are men of our spiritual function called to mingle in the counsels of you, the mighty ones of this world, and to bear our part in legislating for the land? Why is this strict union of Church and State?—an union which, for many more centuries than I can number, has been the glory and security of England. Why, I ask, is this? Is it to make the Church political? No, my Lords; in the language of the most venerable man among you—one of whom, as he is now absent, I can more freely express my gratitude and admiration—I mean the Noble and Learned Earl who for so many years sat on that Woolsack—it is not to make the Church political, but to make the State religious. Therefore, my Lords, it is that we sit here. We sit among you mainly and chiefly, (not, indeed, solely, but mainly and chiefly,) that we may be at all times ready, when occasion shall demand, to instil into your counsels the holy lessons of gospel truth—to watch over the best and highest interests of those for whom you legislate—to raise our warning voice against every attempt, from whatever quarter it may proceed, to sever policy from religion, or to sacrifice the smallest particle of that pure faith, for which your forefathers, my Lords, drove a bigot from his Throne, and our predecessors were content to be led by his beadles to a gaol! My Lords, I stand before you a Bishop of the united Church of England and of Ireland—the united Church, I say—for never may we forget, that it is united—Never! Never! Never!—least of all, in this dark hour of suffering to the Irish branch, of common trial, of common peril (it may be) to both. I stand here, and implore your Lordships to give your most serious attention to the high religious interests, aye, and I

must be permitted to add, the high religious duties, which are involved in this night's question. I stand here, and conjure you to cast off, for one brief hour, all inferior thoughts, and to remember only that you are Christian legislators.

My Lords, four-and-twenty hours have scarcely passed since we humbled ourselves in the House of God, deploring the sins of a guilty people, and beseeching Him to avert the fearful scourges which those sins have merited. We all, then, 'humbly acknowledged, that through our neglect of God's ordinances, through our misuse of God's bounties, offences 'have multiplied in the land.' My Lords, of all those ordinances, the most sacred is the due and free use of his Holy Word—of all those bounties, the most precious is the gift of that Holy Word. And will you, then, my Lords, on this, the first night of your assembling together after that solemn service—will you join in dereliction of your first duty—in deserting the cause of God's own Word? My Lords, I have no right to speak to you of my own feelings—if I had, I would entreat, I would beseech you—I would not, indeed, imitate the eloquent action of the most eloquent of living men—I would not bend my knee in prayer to you, for I pray not to mortal man—but if reverence did not forbid me to mingle the attitude and the words of prayer with the excitement of this debate, I would humbly pray to Him, whose poor and worthless creatures we all are—aye, my Lords, the highest and the proudest, no less than the lowliest and the meekest—I would pray to Him, that He would bow the hearts of all here as the heart of one man, 'to put away the accursed thing from among you'—to disclaim all part in this most unhallowed work, even though the

name and the seal of our Gracious Sovereign be upon it.

My Lords, that name and that seal, affixed to such a Commission—in execution of such purposes—by such instruments—fill the mind with strange musings; awaken affecting recollections; invite, perhaps, to some comparisons. But I forbear—I will not be further stirred by them, than to warn the counsellors of a Gracious Prince,—all whose thoughts, and wishes, and intentions are, we know, for the good and happiness of his people—to warn them, ere it be too late—while thrones are tottering, and crowns are falling around us—while they themselves are reminding us, most properly and most wisely—I thank them for it—while they are reminding us, that even now God's judgments are in the earth—to warn them, I say, that He, by whom Kings reign, may be provoked to say again, what He once said to a monarch whom He had Himself placed over His own chosen people.—
 ‘ Because thou hast rejected the Word of the Lord,
 ‘ He also hath rejected thee from being King over
 ‘ Israel.’

On a Division the Numbers were :—

Contents, Present	60
Non-Contents, Present	59
Majority of Lords Present for the Motion	1
 Contents, Proxies	 27
Non-Contents, Proxies	66
 Total of Contents	 87
Of Non-Contents	125
 Majority against the Motion	 38

APPENDIX.

IN proof of the grievous want of the Bible in Ireland, the following evidence is offered.—It is from a source beyond all suspicion—from a *Roman Catholic gentleman, the nephew of the Earl of Fingal*, J. M. Donelan, Esq., given on oath 8th December, 1824, before the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry.—See App. 1 Rep. p. 489.

Q. 'Do you think the peasantry could in most instances distinguish between a Testament, and any other book of the same size, upon a religious subject, put into their hands ?

A. 'Upon my word, I think they scarcely could do it, except where the exertions of the Bible Society have succeeded ; but in many parts of Connaught, the peasant does not know what a Bible or Testament is.

'I have spoken to peasants as I have been riding along the road, and asked them if they had any objection to reading the Scriptures, and they have said not. I have then asked them if they knew what a Testament was, and they have said not.

Q. 'Do they generally understand, that the Bible contains the word of God, the history of our Saviour, the history of the creation, and the redemption of the world ?

A. 'I think we may say in general, they do not ; they have some general notion of it ; but it is a very vague idea. In some few instances you will meet with an utter ignorance of it altogether.'

In proof of the desire of the people for the Holy Scriptures, the following evidence is cited from the examination on oath, 22d January, 1825, of *Henry Monck Mason, Esq., LL.D.*, Honorary Secretary of the Irish Society.—1 Rep. App. p. 746-7.

Q. 'Have you known instances of the Roman Catholic Clergy exerting their authority to take the Irish Scriptures out of the hands of those in whom you may have placed them ?

A. 'Yes ; to a very considerable extent. They have denounced the Irish Scriptures from the altar in Kerry and in Meath, and have called our New Testament, because it is in some instances bound in black, the "Black Book," and have produced it as such, and exhibited it as such in its black coat, connecting it with the "powers of darkness."

Q. 'Have you any means of knowing whether the peasantry have in any, and what instances, yielded to these denunciations, and given up that black book ?

A. 'They have, perhaps I might say, in one instance in twenty yielded, and then with great reluctance ; but in general they have rather given up anything than the Irish Scriptures. I have known instances of their having, to a considerable extent, given up the authority of their Priests rather than the book.

Q. 'Do you conceive that they merely pride themselves in the possession of this book, or that they actually read it ?

A. 'I am convinced that they read it.

Q. 'Have you any means of stating to us, whether the individuals merely read it to themselves or their families, or whether the means that one man may have of reading it, become the means of bringing it to the knowledge of several others ?

A. 'The gentlemen in correspondence with us state, that it is the constant habit for them to read it at home in their cabins.

Q. 'Do you mean merely to their own families, or are there any individuals who assemble to hear it ?

A. 'There are instances of large numbers coming to hear the scriptures read in the Irish by adults.

Q. 'Have you any knowledge, or have you received such information, as to leave any doubt in your mind as to what is the effect of those denunciations' (by the priests against the use of scriptures) 'upon the minds of the Roman Catholics as to the scriptures ?

A. 'I think it often creates a strong feeling in their mind against their clergy ; and, in most instances, creates a suspicion of something wrong on the part of the priest who has denounced them.'

In confirmation of this evidence, the following most important document is given. It was read by the Earl of Roden in the course of the debate.

'To the Committee of the Irish Society for educating the native Irish through the medium of their own language.

'It having been officially and publicly stated, that his Majesty's present government are of opinion, "that the determination of education societies in Ireland to enforce the reading of the scriptures in their schools had defeated their object as Education Societies," and that on these grounds Parliamentary aid is to be withdrawn from such institutions,

‘We Roman Catholics, Masters, and Adult Scholars, in the King’s-court district, in connexion with the Irish Society, having, through the instrumentality of that society, been taught to read the scriptures, and thereby to appreciate them as the word of the living God, feel it an imperative duty, a duty which we owe to the Irish Societies, ourselves, our children, and our fellow countrymen, to come forward at this momentous period, when the present mode of education is about to be changed, and the scriptures removed from our National Schools, publicly to express our humble but most firm, sincere, and heartfelt sentiments on this important subject.

‘In that sacred book which many of us, at an advanced age, have been taught to read in our beloved tongue, in that sacred book which to us and our fathers had been too long unknown, we are commanded to be subject to the higher powers. In obedience to that divine injunction, and with due respect for rulers, we would beg leave to assure them that the opinion, “that Education Societies in Ireland, by enforcing the reading of the Scriptures in their schools had defeated their object as Education Societies,” *is not founded in truth.*

‘In our humble sphere of life, mingling daily among the numerous peasantry, of which we form a part, we have more sure and certain means to know the real sentiments of that peasantry relative to scriptural education than any member of his Majesty’s Government. We, therefore, most truly and solemnly declare, that the Irish peasantry in general are sincerely and zealously attached to the scriptures, and instead of objecting to send their children to Bible Schools, the very circumstance of the Bible being read in a school would induce many of them to prefer that school.

‘In proof of this statement, we would refer to the thousands of Roman Catholic youth in the London Hibernian, Baptist, and Kildare Place Schools; we would refer to the thousands of the adult Catholic population at present in the Scriptural schools of the Irish Society; we would refer to the way-layings, abuse, and murders to which Irish masters and scholars have been often exposed; we would refer to the immense and annually increasing issue of Scriptures from the Hibernian Bible Society; we would refer to the thousands of Irish and English Scriptures, which Irish masters annually circulate amongst their numerous adult scholars. We can assure the committee of the Irish Society, we can assure his Majesty’s Government, that the Irish peasantry are most anxious for Scriptural knowledge for themselves and for their children. There are thousands and tens of thousands of Roman Catholics,

whose cry may never reach the ear of the British senate, and who dare not breathe a word against the tyranny that oppresses them, who, from sincere love for Scriptural education, in defiance of every species of hostility, continue to send their children to Bible schools.

‘ Under these circumstances, though conscious that the society with which we are connected is entirely independent of parliamentary aid, and unaffected by recent legislative enactments, still, we trust, that a British parliament never will use its influence to arrest the progress of Scriptural knowledge in Ireland, deprive the Irish peasant of the book of God, which he reveres, or withdraw its usual aid from any society, merely because the Bible was read in its schools.

‘ Believing that the Holy Scriptures contain the mind and will of God to his creatures, that they were given for our learning, and are able to make us wise unto salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus, we consider them the only sure and safe basis for the literary education of youth, the only general centre wherein the various religious denominations can meet; and we are convinced, that, pure and entire as they came from the Deity, and were given to man, they are the property, the privilege, and the birth-right of every human being, with which no power on earth has any right to interfere.’

Earl of Roden.—‘ This address was presented to the Irish Society at its annual meeting on Saturday last, 17th March, by a Deputation of Irish masters, all Roman Catholics. It has been signed by 3221 signatures.

‘ Every dependence may be placed on the genuineness of the signatures. *Name, abode, and nearest post town.* No individual was allowed to affix his name without being made thoroughly acquainted with the nature and contents of the document.

‘ Rev. Mr. Winning, of King’s-court, who lives in the midst of these people, writes: “ I am confident that if time had permitted, and exertion had been made, that instead of three, we might have had ten thousand signatures.

“ The same persons would have signed a petition to Parliament to the same purpose; but when those persons in Dublin, who would have wished for a petition to Parliament, first heard of the signing this address, there had been already 1000 signatures attached to it. And when Mr. Winning and other persons in the country first knew of the feeling and intentions of the people, they were afraid to urge them to sign a petition, lest, from their names getting into the hands of the demagogues, they might be exposed to personal violence.” ’

Lastly, in confirmation of the whole, the following extract, read by the Earl of Wicklow on a subsequent night, is given from the official letter, dated June 1, of J. Leslie Foster, Esq., 1827, (now one of the Barons of the Exchequer in Ireland,) and James Glassford, Esq., two of the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry in 1824-7, addressed to their three brother Commissioners, laid before Parliament, and published with the 9th Report:—

‘About twenty years ago, the Scriptures, as we are led to believe, were not read in so many as 600 schools in Ireland, while at present, as we have ascertained and stated in our second Report, they have found their way into 6058 daily schools, independent of 1945 Sunday schools—in all, into above 8000 schools.

‘It is further very worthy of remark, that of the 6058 daily schools in which the Scriptures are now read, only 1879 are connected with any societies whatever,—whether those aided by Government, or those supported by individual contributions. In the remaining 4179 schools, the Scriptures have of late years been adopted by the *voluntary choice* of the conductors and teachers, the latter of whom are generally dependent for their livelihood upon the pleasure of the parents of their pupils; *a signal proof that there is no repugnance to Scriptural instruction among the people*, and not less an illustration of the effects silently produced by the example and competition of better institutions upon the common schools of the country.

‘This great amelioration in the education of the Irish peasantry is still in progress, and perhaps *can now be checked by no means less powerful than such an interference on the part of the State as would be calculated to counteract it.*’

(Signed) J. LESLIE FOSTER.
JAMES GLASSFORD.

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